

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUREAU OF HEALTH & NUTRITION SERVICES AND CHILD/FAMILY/SCHOOL
PARTNERSHIPS
25 INDUSTRIAL PARK ROAD
MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT 06457

TO: Sponsors of School Nutrition Programs

FROM: Maureen Staggenborg, Director, Child Nutrition Programs

DATE: August 6, 2004

SUBJECT: **Operational Memorandum # 18-04**

- I. **IMPORTANT** Program Issues and Appeal Procedures for Application Determinations and Verification
- II. Clarification of Mailing Address

- I. Sponsors of the National School Lunch, School Breakfast, After School Snack, and Special Milk Programs must comply with the terms of CFR Part 245 when providing free and reduced price benefits to eligible children in schools. Key requirements of this legislation are contained in the *Eligibility Guidance for School Meals Manual* at <http://www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/nutrition/SchoolNutrIndex.htm> .

To review:

- 1) Sponsors must annually update and maintain on file a copy of the *Policy Statement for Free and Reduced Price Meals, After School Snacks, and/or Free Milk*. This 4-page document delineates procedures for service of meals without overt identification, establishes procedures for collecting applications, and specifies the terms for a fair hearing procedure.
- 2) Sponsors must distribute a letter and application to all households at the beginning of each school year.
- 3) Sponsors must generate an annual public release that describes the availability of the meals programs.
- 4) Each program must have a written collection procedure that describes how the sponsors will ensure accurate meal accountability while protecting the privacy of each child's household income status.

Copies of each of these documents must be maintained on file for review. Sample copies of each form are available at the website listed above. Copies of the letter and application must be available to new households that transfer into the school district during the school year.

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We wish to remind all sponsors of your obligation regarding fair hearing procedures. It has become common practice to redirect inquiries to the Child Nutrition Program staff when a household challenges local eligibility decisions. Please note that our Office cannot continue to take these calls. You will now be expected to implement your local fair hearing procedures when a parent disagrees with a determination.

The Child Nutrition staff will discuss particular eligibility issues with the district hearing official if requested, and will continue to offer technical assistance, but the first order of response to a household's disagreement with a decision must be the local fair hearing procedure.

Please share this memorandum with the designated hearing official(s) in your district. Be sure that this official understands that his or her name on the Parent Letter and Policy Statement implies a commitment to carry out the terms of the fair hearing process for both application determinations, and for challenges to the Verification process.

- II.** Reorganization within the Department of Education has resulted in some lost or delayed mail, so we ask that you please check to be sure that you have the correct address. In particular, please note the name change for the Bureau.

All mail should be sent to:

Bureau of Health & Nutrition Services and Child/Family/School Partnerships
Child Nutrition Programs
25 Industrial Park Road
Middletown, CT 06457

When sending claims for reimbursement, please send to the attention of Avis Kelly.